

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, SA

SUBJECT: CIVAIR - SAUDI REQUEST FOR AIR TRANSPORT AGREEMENT

REF: JIDDA 8116

1. SEPTTEL IN PREPARATION WILL EXPLAIN FACTORS UNDERLYING
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US-MIDDLE EAST AIR TRANSPORT RELATIONS, CURRENT STATUS OF
VARIOUS PENDING ISSUES, AND RELEVANT US AVIATION POLICY.
HOWEVER, BECAUSE WE WOULD PREFER THAT SAUDIS HEAR OF
TENTATIVE SETTLEMENT OF SYRIA/JORDAN REQUEST FOR AIRLINE
ROUTE RIGHTS TO US (SEE BELOW) FROM US OFFICIALS
(RATHER THAN INDIRECTLY), EMBASSY SHOULD RESPOND TO SAUDI
CAD QUERY IN REFTTEL ALONG FOLLOWING LINES ASAP.

A. USG HAS HAD SAUDI REQUEST UNDER SERIOUS CONSIDERATION. AS SAUDIS AWARE, US CONCERNED OVER RAPIDLY DEVELOPING MULTIPLICITY OF PLANS FOR NEW OR EXPANDED AIR SERVICES BETWEEN US AND MIDDLE EAST. WHILE IT RECOGNIZES THAT THERE SHOULD BE FULLY ADEQUATE AIR SERVICES, THERE IS A DANGER THAT, IF THE DEVELOPMENT IS NOT CAREFULLY CO-ORDINATED TO PRODUCE AN EFFICIENT SYSTEM WHICH PROVIDES REASONABLE PROFITS TO THE AIRLINES AND MAXIMUM BENEFITS TO THE PUBLIC, ALL PARTIES COULD END UP WITH AN EXCESSIVE NUMBER OF AIRLINES PROVIDING DUPLICATIVE SERVICES FOR THE BENEFIT OF NO ONE.

B. THE US SEEKS, THEREFORE, TO ENCOURAGE REGIONAL APPROACHES TO US-MIDDLE EAST AIRLINE SERVICES, SUCH AS THE PLAN OF SYRIA AND JORDAN TO OPERATE A JOINT NON-STOP SERVICE BY THEIR AIRLINES BETWEEN AMMAN/DAMASCUS AND NEW YORK. (FYI: USG, FOLLOWING HIGH-LEVEL REVIEW OF A LONG-STANDING JOINT JORDANIAN/SYRIAN OPERATING PROPOSAL IN LATE 1976, WILL SHORTLY OFFER FORMALLY TO GOJ AND SARG, IN RETURN FOR CUSTOMARY AVIATION CONCESSIONS ON THEIR PART, A COMPROMISE ARRANGEMENT THAT WOULD ENABLE THEIR NATIONAL AIRLINES TO OPERATE JOINT NON-STOP SERVICE BETWEEN AMMAN/DAMASCUS AND NEW YORK ON A TWO-FLIGHT (ONE FOR EACH AIRLINE) PER WEEK BASIS FOR A TRIAL PERIOD OF 12 TO 18 MONTHS. WE EXPECT TO CONSUMMATE THIS ARRANGEMENT IN AN EXCHANGE OF NOTES WITH JORDANIAN AND SYRIAN EMBASSIES IN VERY NEAR FUTURE. END FYI.). YOU MAY INFORM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SAUDIS THAT USG HAS RECENTLY ADVISED SYRIA AND JORDAN THAT IT IS PREPARED TO GRANT RIGHTS FOR TWO ROUNDTRIP FLIGHTS PER WEEK BY THIS JOINT, COOPERATIVE EFFORT FOR A TRIAL PERIOD. USG ENCOURAGES SAUDIS TO CONSIDER JOINT OPERATIONS TO US IN AN ARAB CONSORTIUM.

C. THE NECESSARY TIME TO DEVELOP SAUDI PARTICIPATION IN SOME CONSORTIUM OR JOINT OPERATION WOULD PRESUMABLY BE AVAILABLE BASED ON THE CAD'S REMARK THAT SAA WILL PROBABLY NOT BE ABLE TO MOUNT A US SERVICE FOR SEVERAL YEARS. IT WOULD, IN ANY EVENT, BE DESIRABLE TO NEGOTIATE AN AIR TRANSPORT AGREEMENT AT THE TIME THERE IS AN OPERATIONS PLAN IN BEING FOR AIR SERVICE, SINCE ANY AGREEMENT REACHED NOW WOULD LIKELY REQUIRE ALTERATION LATER AS OPERATIONS PLANS AND THE FUTURE OF US-MIDDLE EAST AIR TRANSPORT RELATIONS MATURE.

D. USG WOULD BE PLEASED TO CONTINUE TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES WITHIN FOREGOING CONTEXT, EITHER THROUGH FURTHER

DISCUSSIONS WITH EMOASSY OR, IF DESIRED, IN DIRECT DISCUSSIONS WITH US CIVAIR OFFICIALS AT AN OPPORTUNE TIME.

2. WHILE WE WOULD PREFER THAT SAUDIS AGREE TO POSTPONE THEIR REQUEST FOR AIR TRANSPORT AGREEMENT (AND FOREGOING IS INTENDED TO GET THIS ACROSS), DEPARTMENT DOES NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE PRODUCTIVE SIMPLY TO STONEWALL. IF SAUDIS INSIST ON TALKS, EMBASSY SHOULD EMPHASIZE POINT IN PARA 1 (D) ABOVE THAT WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO ARRANGE DIRECT TALKS BETWEEN SAUDI CIVAIR AUTHORITIES AND A US TEAM HEADED BY DEPARTMENT WITH CAB PARTICIPATION TO EXPLORE ISSUES.

3. SAUDIS SHOULD BE THOROUGHLY DISA0USED THAT US WILL ACCEPT COMMERCIAL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN SAA AND US AIRLINES IF THIS MEANS REVENUE POOLING OR OTHER ANTI-COMPETITIVE ARRANGEMENTS CONTRARY US LAW AND POLICY. IF OTHER TYPE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF "COMMERCIAL" AGREEMENTS INTENDED, IT WOULD BE HELPFUL HAVE CLARIFICATION.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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